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AUTHOR	Hartnett, Joyce
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ABSTRACT

This interdisciplinary unit is designed for secondary level history students but can be adapted for other levels. The focus of the unit is on Diego Rivera's mural "Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda." Students use the mural to examine three major phases of Mexican history and to provide a basis of research of Mexican history and politics. Contemporary Mexico is addressed using the history as a background for study. (EH)

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Mexico: A Transition to Democracy. Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar Abroad 1996 (Mexico).

by Joyce Hartnett

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program
Mexico 1996
Independent Curriculum Project
Joyce Hartnett

Background Notes:
This project is specifically designed for **history** students at the **secondary** level, although it can be adapted for students at other levels. I teach at Seattle Middle College High School, a program for students who left high school prior to graduation. They are between the ages of 16 and 20. When people say that our students are "at risk," we are fond of saying, "Yes, they are at risk of succeeding."

The success of our Humanities program can largely be attributed to the curriculum. We teach a fusion of history, literature, art and music that celebrates the struggles, labor and victories of working people. This **interdisciplinary** approach facilitates the inclusion of a variety of teaching methods complementing our student population's diverse learning styles.

As the summer seminar lead us throughout Mexico, I was dazzled by the dignity and strength of the people and profoundly impressed by their deep sense of history. The art of Mexico expresses these qualities. Particularly stunning are the murals of **Diego Rivera**. For this project I decided to focus on **"Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda."** I know that my students will appreciate Rivera's impish playfulness and the project will get them to actively engage in researching Mexican history and analyzing contemporary Mexican politics.

Objectives:
1. To develop group cooperation skills.

2. To provide a synopsis of Mexican history and to introduce issues of contemporary Mexican politics.

3. To extend research skills, including the use of databases (i.e. General Reference Center) and Internet.

4. To develop critical thinking skills.

5. To appreciate art as a political medium.

Strategies:

Phase A - Mexican History
1. Using a slide or opaque projector to make the image as large as possible, show the students a reproduction of "Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda." Allow for student responses and speculations about the intent of the artist and the identities of the people assembled in the mural.

2. Give a brief background on Diego Rivera and this mural. (See Appendix A for copy of pamphlet from Museo Mural Diego Rivera.)

3. Point out that the mural is composed of three large sections representing the three major phases of Mexican history. Explain that with each of these phases the Mexican people have struggled for and achieved greater democracy. This mural is the springboard for a study of

Mexican history and politics around the **theme: "Mexico - A Transition to Democracy."**

4. Divide the students into three groups, each responsible for a section of the mural. Give them the names of the people in their sections. Explain that the members of the group must research the people in their section of the mural and report back to the whole class. Ask the students to pick the person from their part of the mural whom they could most look like--with the assistance of make up and costumes! Their report should include the identity of the person and his/her historical role told from the point of view of that person. The students in the class should speculate about why Rivera placed this figure in juxtaposition to the other surrounding figures.

5. Have the students draw/paint a wall size backdrop for Rivera's mural including the trees, fountain and buildings--everything except the people. On the day of the reports, students should dress like the people they researched and arrange themselves as in the mural for a class photo.

6. All students will write a composition on the topic: Diego Rivera's "Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in the Alameda" as an expression of the theme: Mexico - A Transition to Democracy.

Phase B - Contemporary Mexico

6. Have the students find articles on contemporary Mexican politics. If necessary, instruct the students on the use of databases (i.e. General Reference Center) and Internet. (Photo copies of possible articles are included in Appendix B.) Have the students identify key players in contemporary Mexico.

7. Have the students speculate and discuss: If Diego Rivera were alive today, and he added a fourth section to this mural, who would he include and how would he compose the scene? How does this new section continue the theme: Mexico - A Transition to Democracy?

8. Have the students sketch their own ideas for the fourth section and then collaborate on a wall size mural for the classroom.

9. All students write a composition on the topic: Contemporary Mexico - A Transition to Democracy.

Appendix A

Pamphlet from Museo Mural Diego Rivera
Ciudad de Mexico

Appendix B

Sample Articles on Contemporary Mexico
General Reference Center and Internet

From defiance@u.washington.edu Sat Oct 5 16:25:47 1996
Date: Mon, 29 Jul 1996 10:57:40 -0700 (PDT)
From: "S. Randy Rowland" <defiance@u.washington.edu>
To: Marcos subs -- Bob Royce <bb269@scn.org>, Daniel Hall <bc578@scn.org>,
Jime Page <bc881@scn.org>, Claude Jolly <claude@u.washington.edu>,
defiance@u.washington.edu, James Matthews <jamesm@cks.ssd.k12.wa.us>,
Marty Kunz <kunzm@admin.immunex.wa.com>, Jim Ballard <kurd@delphi.com>,
Matthew Rolloson <mattroll@u.washington.edu>, mgooch@scn.org,
Roger <mordredd@u.washington.edu>,
Nancy Kroon <rednurse@u.washington.edu>,
Wren Roark <roarkw@Ext.Missouri.edu>,
David Snyder <SNYDERD@heartstream.com>, Tom Warner <t-warner@scn.org>
Subject: Message from Cecilia Rodriguez (fwd)

Subject: Message from Cecilia Rodriguez

---------- Enclosure number 1 ----------

THE MYSTERY OF THE ZAPATISTAS
by Cecilia Rodriguez
July 17, 1996

In San Andres Larrainzar, the Zapatista delegation is once again engaged in a dialogue with the federal government. In the five Aguascalientes massive structures go up under a brilliant blue sky. In Oventic, hundreds of indigenous people trudge up and down steep rocky inclines, with wooden beams on their backs or armfuls of racks and dirt.

"It is hard for people to believe the poverty here" comments Mayor Ana Maria "The thousands who live around here distinguish themselves from the other campesinos in Chiapas. There is nc land. The little plots they have behind their houses barely grow enough for them to feed themselves. The land is rocky and must be fertilized in order to produce the few stalks of corn. Tostada and pozol, that is their daily diet. The people here have nothing--no tables, plates or spoons--only a few clay pots which they make themselves...me quiebro la cabeza to think of ways in which this suffering can be alleviated in the short term. When people bring food it disappears in days. No...we must think of a way to produce income. The women will prepare booths where they can show their embroidery at the Encuentro, maybe they can open a market..."

It is in the worried tone of the Major's voice that the key to the Zapatista struggle lies. The social base of the Zapatistas is real. They are the people who walk, or flock in flat-bed trucks when the Zapatista delegation arrives in San Andres for the Dialogue. They are the people who stand for hours in the cold and rain with little food and no place to sleep, as they form a security ring which stands between the Mexican military police and the Mexican Red Cross. The Tzotzil men and women who arrive each time to protect the Zapatista delegation stand patiently behind the taller Europeans or Ladinos. They are seldom ever able to see but portions of the Zapatista delegates, seldom acknowledged by the media. They are only the objects of the frowns of the military police.

Yet it is their blood which covered the streets near San Cristobal and Ocosingo during the days of combat in

January of 1994. They are the ones who were tortured, who languish still in jails all over Chiapas. Their crime is poverty. The only alternative left to them was death by negligence. "We are so despised, so victimized by the profound racism of the Mexican government that it took a war to make them listen, the fear of our weapons to finally make them build roads to our communities" comments Comandante David.

On Friday, July 12th they listened patiently as Comandante David translated a special message to them from Subcomandante Marcos. It is the social base of the EZLN which has decided to listen to the government in the hope that they do not have to continue to die of neglect, in the hope that they can have a chance for life.

Although the masked faces of the Zapatistas have now become a media icon, who they are and what they are fighting for still remains a mystery to some. To some intellectuals and academics who are fascinated with the ideas in their communiques; they are a convenient tool by which to capture a few more credentials and a little bit of limelight. To some leftists whose time-worn rhetoric has historically failed to contain the energies of a significant social base; they are reformists and "pseudo-guerrillas" because they have not returned to combat. To others who believe that a process of social change is linear and only possible through force, the Zapatistas' objective is vague and too bland for their tastes.

Those who are familiar with the profound social and political problems of Mexico, understand that combat alone is incapable of securing a viable solution. Others who have dedicated long years to working in impoverished communities understand that the process of change, when it is real and consistent, is not simple or quick. It is in fact at times tedious, filled with reversals, painful lessons, surprises, and sudden advances.

The mystery of the Zapatistas is, in essence the mystery which confronts the world. More and more peoples of the world live in similar misery. The militarization which the people of Mexico now suffer, is in reality a global phenomenon whose cruelty is manifest in the continents of Asia and Africa and even certain populations in industrialized countries.

The sleeplessness of Mayor Ana Maria as she attempts to resolve the dilemma of the Tzotzil people of the highlands, is our own. If we denounce exploitation, what do we propose in its place? How do we know that our proposal is viable? What are we doing now to make it concrete, to test its potential? HOW DO WE ORGANIZE?

The Zapatistas, as defined by their social base, not by immature and dogmatic formulas for armed struggle, pose for us the very questions which most theories of human development have never resolved. Questions of accountability. Questions of how to construct while in the midst of a war. Questions about the process which is necessary to decentralize power. Questions about how to feed, and heal, and educate millions. Questions of how to re-construct human relationships which have been exploitative for hundreds of years. Questions of how to create an alternative to combat.

"I sometimes laugh when people get emotional about our weapons" says Mayor Ana Maria "I'll tell you something

really emotional...the day we finally convinced the people of the villages about the importance of boiling the water they drink and cook with...that was hard work...it took such a long time."

The indigenous people of the five Aguascalientes are busy constructing for the Intercontinental Encounter. In the rust belt of America, former auto workers are busy looking for a new way to make a living. In the sweat shops of San Francisco and Los Angeles, the immigrants are busy securing their escape from the brutal reality of the Third World which they have left behind. In the fields of Oregon and Washington State the farmworkers are busy trying to escape the plague of cancer from pesticides. In the schools of Chicago and Detroit the children are busy hoping that their diligence can win them freedom they so desperately need from the crack wars of the streets.

The call for jobs, housing, education, health, peace, liberty...is a call which arises from millions who do not have a voice, who do not have the means by which to arrive in Chiapas and talk to the Comandantes. It is the call which has been lost by the left as they argue about theories and processes. It is the human aspiration which is forgotten by those who use social justice for their own personal agendas, which is neglected and dismissed by those who are now fascinated by the ERP and exasperated by the Zapatistas. It is the call which, if we are to find our own dignity, we must hear.

The greatest mystery of the Zapatistas is that they are our mirror. They exist, in essence because we no longer remember who we are as human beings and because, much like those we so fiercely criticize, we are not accountable to those who do not have a voice. It is so much easier to be accountable only to ourselves and to those most like us.

How different our dialogue at the Intercontinental Encounter will be if we place foremost in our minds the face of the unemployed auto worker, the tear of the children in Chicago dodging bullets, the hands of the Tzotsil woman who stands silently in the security ring around the Zapatista delegation with her child strapped onto her back. How different our proposals will be if we measure the viability of our ideas by a practice which we are already carrying out in a given community.

Has the EZLN ceased to be a threat? Hardly. Their effort to open a political space is being received with everything from intense espionage to repressive legislation to the growth of paramilitary groups. They remain one of the largest revolutionary armed groups in the history of Latin America with a ten-year period of training and preparation; even the SEDENA doesn't believe itself when it says it can wipe them out in a few weeks. Is the FZLN the political front of the EZLN? No. It is a place where those without a voice can organize a peaceful transition to democracy. It hopes to pioneer new political relationships. It will be the place where soldiers of the EZLN will wind up if the possibility of a peaceful transition can ever be secured. It hopes to become a people's organization without the problems of a traditional political party, and organization which will tackle the long-term proposition of a "direct democracy", something which remains vague because it is so new. The FZLN is the clear, definitive answer that

the EZLN will uphold its commitment to a political solution -- if the ruling party will allow it. Can the FZLN be successful? It will be very difficult if the international community becomes confused and believes government propaganda that the EZLN's struggle is all but settled. Has the EZLN made an alliance with the PRD? The EZLN knows that the U.S. State Department has already decided that the PAN will be the most comfortable partner for the continued pillage of Mexico by the oil companies and Wall Street investors. The EZLN can hardly sit on its hands and be "pure" by refusing to make alliances with certain political leaders who might give a more open political society a chance.

The government is hoping the Intercontinental Encounter will fail; that international support for the Zapatistas will bottom out so they may go about the business of "stifling" the national movement and snuffing out the hope of the people of Mexico. It is betting on the fact that people will get bored and frustrated with the endless waiting, the rain, the often-crushing process of organization, and the long trips on winding, narrow roads.

The Zapatista struggle is the most fervent expression of a humanity seeking an alternative. It is a moment in history where we can shirk off all nostalgia for the past and take up the task of re-construction of a practical set of ideas, however simple and weak, of organizations with strong social bases which can someday become movements, of hope. It is a moment when we can ignore borders and respond in kind to the multi-nationals whose franchise on the world depends on our passivity and helplessness.

Let us make the most of the long waits and explore those alternatives with each other. Let us shake off the guilt and the gut empathy which arises when we see the children of the communities and convert it into concrete continuous actions when we return to the States. Let us leave behind our fear of being manipulated and take the risk of taking on responsibility for something else beyond ourselves, for something we can perhaps become in a global community.

Only then will the sleeplessness of Mayor Ana Maria be replaced with the unprecedented vision of a global community involved in constructing an alternative path for humanity.

Database: General Reference Center
Key Words: Mexico Government
Library: King County Library System

Source: Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, July 26, 1996 p726K7356.

Title: Mexico's government agrees to ''extraordinary'' electoral reforms.(Originated from Knight-Ridder Newspapers)
Author: Esther Schrader

-- Press [L] to link to other documents on these topics --

Subjects: Mexico - Politics and government
Political reform - Mexico

Full Text: COPYRIGHT Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service 1996

MEXICO CITY _ Wide-ranging electoral reforms agreed to late Thursday by Mexico's four major political parties could bring this long-autocratic nation closer to democracy than ever before, political observers said Friday.

''It's an extraordinary phenomenon of consensus, and while we have been critical, we have to recognize this advance,'' said lawyer and democracy advocate Jose Agustin Ortiz Pinchetti. ''The conditions to make these accords work exist, because we Mexicans have been ready and waiting for democracy since 1908, when Porfirio Diaz promised it.''

Among the most stunning of the reforms is a proposal to grant the right to vote to Mexican citizens living abroad _ a move that opposition parties have sought for years, hoping to profit of the votes of the more than 4 million Mexicans living in the United States. Many sympathize with dissenting political forces at home and likely would vote against the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has ruled Mexico for six decades.

Along with the agreement to allow Mexicans living abroad to vote, the pact includes several proposed reforms that, if implemented, could transform what voting means for the 93 million Mexicans living in Mexico.

The reforms propose the direct election of the Mexico City mayor, who has been appointed directly by the president and governs more than a fifth of the country's people, and call for limits on campaign spending and for greater autonomy for the Federal Electoral Institute, which manages the nation's election campaigns. Until now the institute has reported to Mexico's Interior Ministry and its head has been appointed directly by the president. The reforms would make it a separate government agency and its head would be chosen by representatives of all of Mexico's major parties.

''Today, united in plurality, we take an essential step in building the democracy that Mexicans want, the democracy that Mexicans need and the democracy that Mexicans deserve,'' Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon said Thursday night, flanked by leaders of the PRI, the National Action Party, the Party of the Democratic Revolution and the Workers Party.

Zedillo, hand-picked two years ago by his PRI predecessor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, has vowed far-reaching electoral reforms that could end the lock his party has had on power since 1929. Along with political reforms, he has promised not to hand-pick his successor.

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But with Zedillo's presidency embattled by economic crisis and growing political and financial scandals, it took 19 months of bitter negotiations to reach the agreement. Several parties had walked out of the talks more than once, protesting alleged election fraud in local races throughout the country. The opposition parties will battle the PRI in state, local and federal elections next year, and will compete for the presidency in 2000.

Friday, Zedillo sent the 17 proposed constitutional changes to the House of Deputies, the first step toward making the reforms binding. A special session of Congress is to convene next week to consider the reforms, which must pass both houses of the Mexican Congress.

With Congress still handily controlled by the PRI, the proposals are expected to pass easily. The big unanswered question is whether the government will move speedily to apply and enforce the reforms once they become law. Political observers said Friday that thousands of PRI hard-liners scattered throughout the bureaucracy could stall implementation.

U.S. political analysts said the most important element of the pact is the promise to make the Federal Electoral Institute independent.

''Having the Federal Electoral Institute become fully autonomous really is a major step, it will give more credibility to the elections and give equal access to all parties to register allegations of fraud to a body which has greater credibility,'' said Roderic Ai Camp, professor of political science at Tulane University in New Orleans.

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Database: General Reference Center
Key Words: Mexico Government
Library: King County Library System

Source: Time, Feb 20, 1995 v145 n7 p62(1).

Title: Unmasking Marcos. (military action against the Chiapas rebels in Mexico)
Author: Michael S. Serrill

Abstract: Pres Ernesto Zedillo and the government of Mexico stepped up military strikes against the Zapatista rebels. The rebel leader, a man known only as Marcos, has reportedly been identified as Rafael Sebastian Guillen Vicente and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

-- Press [L] to link to other documents on these topics --

Subjects: Chiapas, Mexico - Military aspects
Civil war - Mexico
People: Zedillo, Ernesto - Military policy

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THE WAR OF WORDS BETWEEN THE government of President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de Leon and Chiapas rebels ended last week, and real warfare resumed. In Nuevo Momon, a village in the southern state of Chiapas near the Guatemalan border, sniper fire rained down on a force of Mexican soldiers, killing two of them. Near the town of Cacalomacan, about 50 miles west of Mexico City, 250 police and soldiers surrounded a group of militants and flushed them out of a farmhouse after a two-hour gun battle. In other strongholds of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, or E.Z.L.N., hundreds of heavily armed soldiers made house-to-house searches for rebels and their leaders.

All across Mexico, security forces were on the lookout for the mysterious rebel spokesman known as Subcomandante Marcos. Last week the Chiapas leader, who has always been masked in public appearances, was revealed by Zedillo to be Rafael Sebastian Guillen Vicente, 37.

In a nationally televised speech, Zedillo announced the issuing of arrest warrants for Guillen and four other E.Z.L.N. leaders, who were, contrary to public belief, "neither popular, nor indigenous, nor from Chiapas." The charismatic rebel spokesman and his fellow rebel leaders, the President charged, were former members of a 1970s student revolutionary group. Government aides added that Guillen had grown up in comfortable circumstances in Tampico. He attended private religious schools and the Autonomous University of Mexico, and later taught communications at another university before disappearing in 1983. According to press reports, Guillen lived for several years in Nicaragua, where he worked with the Sandinistas.

The government's show of force ended a 12-month cease-fire that began after the Jan. 1, 1994, Zapatista insurrection left 145 dead and shattered Mexico's modernizing image. The crackdown also came as Zedillo's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party faced a difficult Feb. 12 election in the central state of Jalisco. That was a suspicious coincidence to some analysts, but Zedillo said his moves were triggered by fears of expanded Zapatista military action.

Government sources had hinted for weeks that Zedillo would undertake some strong action to try to rebuild credibility after the peso's disastrous devaluation. That the Zapatistas should be the target was logical: their activity inspired the erosion in investor confidence that ultimately led to financial panic. But Zedillo's evidence for a spreading Zapatista insurrection was sketchy. Arms caches that authorities discovered held little more than a handful of firearms and several dozen grenades.

Now the President has staked much of his dwindling authority on the military offensive. As a Mexico expert in Washington put it, "If Zedillo's military plan works quickly, fine. Markets will be happy, and everyone can get on with business." But if Zedillo is wrong about the narrow base of support for the Zapatistas, he might spark a guerrilla war lasting for years. And further gore a presidency that has more than five long years to run.

CAPTION: MAN ON THE RUN: The rebel leader is reportedly a former college instructor

CAPTION: See above.

Electronic Collection: A16459045
RN: A16459045

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Key Words: Mexico Government
Library: King County Library System

Source: Canadian Dimension, Oct-Nov 1994 v28 n5 p32(3).

Title: Mexico's transition runs deeper. (political changes in Mexico)
Author: Timothy E. Anna

Abstract: The Mexican government is undergoing a political transition that is rooted in its past. The Institutional Revolutionary Party has evolved from a party of the people to a party that promotes free enterprise and privatization. Mexico's centralized government is now being questioned.

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Subjects: Mexico - Politics and government
Opposition (Political science) - Mexico
Organizations: Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico) - Political activity

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On August 21, 1994 Mexicans went to the polls to elect a new president. Although he will not take office until December, immediately after the election all the charisma of the Mexican presidency, which endows the chief executive with nearly mystical authority, immediately shifted from the hands of Carlos Salinas de Gortari into the hands of his successor. The new president inherits the leadership of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has held uninterrupted power since its foundation in 1928, longer than any other currently ruling party in the world. He has at his disposal not only an estimated 10,000 political appointments, but all the influence that 66 years of unbroken succession can bestow. Obviously, a political change is currently underway.

For the first time in the lifetime of participants, however, something else is happening too. The signs are everywhere that the entire Mexican political system is in the midst of a great historical transition. The student rebellion of 1968 was followed in the next two decades by the rise of an organized dissident movement within labor and an increasing entrepreneurial rebellion. This led to an opening in what was previously a closed political system, and later to an institutional political reform (1978-1982) which breathed new life into the moribund political opposition.

In the wake of the collapse of the oil boom and the debt crisis of 1982, Mexico not only ceased to maintain sustained growth, but also suffered severe decreases in the GNP. Between 1982 and 1987 the minimum wage was reduced more than 40 per cent, as the Mexican economy shrank an average of 4 per cent a year. The purchasing power of the minimum wage fell back to the level of 1940, the year the 'Mexican miracle' of economic growth began. The industrializing model of the PRI revealed itself to be unfeasible and, amid the greatest recession in Mexican history, marched off to bankruptcy.

The agrarian economy, long shunted aside in the strategy of industrialization, was so weakened that Mexico lost its cherished food self-sufficiency. The nationalization of the private banks in 1982 caused the collapse of the political symbiosis that had existed between the higher echelons of the financial, industrial, and commercial elite and the state. The fundamental political agreement that had prevailed since the '40s and which knit the ruling party to the dominant business interests, collapsed

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and mutual distrust.

extraordinary adaptability

In such a crisis, the only real wonder is that the political system survived. What saved the PRI, and the entire Mexican system, from the political annihilation that befell other governments in Latin America in the same economic crisis, was the rise to power within the PRI of a new leadership of technocrats. Foreign educated and oriented toward international business, that shunted the old politicians aside. The presidencies of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-88) and Salinas (1988-94) have been 'crisis presidencies' in which all the resources of the state were bent, with remarkable success, toward overcoming Mexico's loss of credibility in world financial circles and renewing economic growth. It is not a coincidence that both presidents were young men (in their early 40s when elected). Both held graduate degrees in economics from US universities, both had served as Secretary of Planning and Budget (the ultimate professional manager), both held no previous elected office prior to the presidency, and both symbolized the rise to power of the technocrats.

The key, then, to the survival of the PRI (whose collapse has been confidently predicted by pundits since the 1960s) is the party's extraordinary adaptability. Under Salinas it transformed itself from what it had always claimed to be -- the party of the Revolution, of the worker and peasant -- to the party of free enterprise, the party that abandoned economic protectionism, that privatized the vast state corporations, and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The prevailing lesson is that, when the official party that has elected every federal government and every state government except two since 1928 is able to convert itself into the exact opposite of what it originally claimed to be, observers cannot count it out. Although the PRI in the 1988 general election won the presidency by the smallest margin of victory in its history (Salinas won by 50.4 per cent in a contest of three candidates, and even that, many Mexicans believe, was achieved only by massive electoral fraud), and although it only narrowly clung to a majority in the federal congress (a majority too small to enact major amendments to the national constitution), the fact is that the PRI is nowhere near dead.

The murder in March of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio stunned Mexicans, chiefly because it briefly tore away the veil of party unanimity. Given the history of Mexico, presidential succession has always been a fundamental issue. It was the last major political assassination (of a president-elect in 1928) that brought about the creation of the party in the first place. The party marshalled all the mighty instruments at its command, however, and since the announcement of the choice of Ernesto Zedillo as the new presidential candidate, the PRI regained some of its initiative.

burying dissent

The January uprising in Chiapas is not the main event. It is one of many threads that is starting to unravel, but by itself it does not represent a fundamental threat to the PRI system. The greatest danger from internal rebellion, in fact, occurred in the first years of the 1970s. In Chiapas, as in so many other places over the years where poverty and marginality provoked resistance, the PRI is already exerting its most powerful weapon -- its ability to co-opt, buy off, and bury dissent in a tidal wave of federal money and federal concessions. Pacifying Chiapas will require starving other worthy needs in other peripheries of the nation, but that has always worked before. In a country where political centralism functions behind the facade

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of federalism, constant jockeying for federal largesse pits the states and municipalities against each other, thereby preventing all the angry peripheries from joining together in common cause against the center.

The real threat of the Chiapas rebellion is the way in which it is currently serving to link the voices of Indians and peasants, long the most ignored political minority in Mexico, with those of urban activists opposed to a corrupt system of rotation in political office.

the mexican revolution outgrown

The problem of the PRI in the transition to a new era is that it seems to be a political party designed for a Mexico that existed before the last decades of modernization. For many years it was a pragmatic coalition uniting in the same political task the interests of all classes in a negotiated contest for resources. But in recent decades, great enclaves and regions have moved into the world of advanced modernity -- cities, middle sectors, universities, intellectuals, the mass media. The party maintained its most powerful sway in the rural, less modernized regions. Yet, those are the very regions that have now been largely abandoned by the government's rush to position Mexico advantageously in the world market through free trade and privatization.

It seems as if Mexico, in its urban, industrial, and service sectors (in a country now overwhelmingly urban) has outgrown the fundamental pact of the Mexican Revolution. Historians Hector Aguilar Camin and Lorenzo Meyer argue that two political logics coexist and struggle in the confusing heart of present day Mexico: "the national-corporative logic, which arose from the fundamental pact of the Mexican Revolution, and the democratic-liberal practice, born from urban and industrial Mexico...The state party exists thanks mainly to the surviving political reserves of the first logic; but it is losing importance and presence as the second one nurtures and seduces the spirits of Mexican society."

The consolidation of the post revolutionary Mexican state by the 1940s completed the centralization of politics, the economy, and, to a considerable extent, culture. The central state and party institutionalized not only the Mexican Revolution but also provincialism, rendering both harmless and insignificant. The net object was to achieve central control over both capital and labor by breaking down the defense of vast territorial size, which, in an earlier time, allowed the survival of regionally distinct social and economic cultures.

re-opening the most fundamental issue

This is where Canadians need to sit up and notice what is happening in Mexico. The entire economic recovery package -- from privatization and deregulation to NAFTA -- has been imposed by the government over the muted protests of those regions and economic sectors that have lagged behind in modernization. To shore up his control in certain states, Salinas removed from office no fewer than 15 state governors. Meanwhile, those regions of the country that have advanced well beyond the norm of the others are demanding that their economic and social weight be matched by a readjustment of relative political weight among the constituent parts of the republic. The upshot is that Mexico, like Canada, is lurching into a reopening of the most fundamental of all political issues -- federalism, or the organization of the nation itself.

Amid a series of crises that have gone on for fourteen years, the autonomy of the states has been trampled. Now regional political and economic elites are restive. Increasingly, Mexicans critical of the regime are beginning to

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argue that Mexico City does not define the totality of the nation.

Philosopher Roger Bartra has concluded that Mexico has already moved into a profound cultural and political crisis. He calls Mexican centralizing nationalism "the odious, legitimating source of a dominant, exploitive system, which seeks to justify deep inequality and injustice through the imposition of uniformity on political culture." He concludes, "A great number of Mexicans are starting to reject that old political culture which has, for more than 60 years, been the faithful companion of authoritarianism, corruption, inefficiency, and backwardness."

The entire Mexican political system -- not just the ruling party and its current economic strategy -- is in rapid transition. Mexican society is witnessing the end of a fundamental agreement within itself, a true change of era.

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Source: The Wall Street Journal, March 30, 1994 pA16(W) pA16(E) col 3 (20 col in).

Title: Zedillo follows Salinas model for Mexico. (Institutional Revolutionary Party presidential candidate Ernesto Zedillo shares Mexican President Carlos Salinas' economic vision) (Column)
Author: David Asman

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Decentralization in government - Mexico
People: Zedillo, Ernesto - Economic policy
Salinas de Gortari, Carlos - Economic policy
Organizations: Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico) - Officials and employees

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Source: The Wall Street Journal, Dec 3, 1993 pA11(W) pA13(E) col 3 (23 col in).

Title: Much more to Mexican politics than who's at the top. (promising trend of break in political dependency between local and central governments) (Column)

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Trouble ahead: Mexico. (the results of gubernatorial races in the states of Guanajuato and Yucatan indicate that opposition to Pres Ernesto Zedillo is growing) The Economist, June 3, 1995 v335 n7917 p36(1).

A new script for Mexico's political theater. (Presidential candidate Manuel Camacho) (Column) David Asman. The Wall Street Journal, Feb 18, 1994 pA13(W) pA13(E) col 3 (23 col in).

Creeping democracy in Mexico. (unfair elections becoming more fair) (Editorial) The New York Times, July 21, 1992 v141 pA14(N) pA18(L) 6 col in.

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peared on the African scene.

Why? Perhaps he has returned for sentimental reasons; one former employee thinks the Lonrho chief is happiest when doing business in Africa, where his company began, especially when things go badly elsewhere. Perhaps he thought a string of diplomatic successes would improve Lonrho's sagging reputation. Or perhaps Mr Rowland is just seizing opportunities and doing what he has always done best: using politics to look after Lonrho's interests.

Last May, when the United Nations was clamping sanctions on Libya because of its alleged involvement in the Pan Am Lockerbie bombing, Mr Rowland publicly defended Colonel Muammar Qaddafi in the *Observer*, Britain's Lonrho-owned Sunday newspaper, arguing that the Libyan dictator's views "weren't unreasonable". Not long before, the Libyan government had agreed to put up £177.5m ($321.4m) for a one-third stake in Lonhro's Metropole Hotel chain. By doing the deal, "I hope to give a lot of enjoyable annoyance to everybody," he wrote. Then, in late July, Mr Rowland appeared in Ghana, together with Libyan officials who were said to be negotiating for a stake in Ashanti Goldfields.

More recently, Mr Rowland used his private aircraft and personal influence to help arrange the first meeting, in Rome, between Afonso Dhaklama, the leader of the Renamo rebels in Mozambique, and Joaquim Chissano, the country's Marx-to-market president. Both men praised Mr Rowland after their meeting. The ceasefire they promised to introduce on October 1st will help Lonrho's farms and mines in Mozambique—as well as in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi, which ship out their exports through Mozambique's ports.

Sudan is another old interest. Its civil war has hurt some Lonrho ventures in Kenya; solving the conflict might help. And, in the longer term, Lonrho might be interested in southern Sudan's oil and gold, which can be got out either through Port Sudan in the north—or, should a ceasefire give the south more sovereignty—through Kenya, where Mr Rowland has many friends.

Whatever his business motives, Mr Rowland is peculiarly well-suited to do a lot of good. Western governments, with their colonial history, are not always considered neutral mediators in Africa. Mr Rowland, an Indian-born half-German with an English name, does not fit into easy political categories. He treats African leaders as friends, and holds back the pompous lectures on human rights. It is not surprising that his methods are controversial. Lonrho feeds the controversy by shrouding him in secrecy, and bristling when journalists ask questions. This makes Mr Rowland seem a bit like the politicians he deals with. Perhaps that is the secret of his success.

Mexico

The nation meets its past, and pasts

FROM OUR MEXICO CORRESPONDENT

EVER since the revolution of 1910-20, Mexico's governments have fed the people on an ideological diet of nationalism, anti-clericalism and state paternalism. The United States, the Roman Catholic church and big business were portrayed as threateningly rich and powerful. It did not matter that, quietly, the state collaborated with all three. As bogeymen, they served to unify a fractured nation, and to legitimise—in the name of social justice and stability—Mexico's undemocratic governments.

President Carlos Salinas is now trying to persuade Mexicans that yesterday's bogeymen are today's allies. Whether or not the American Congress approves the North American Free Trade Agreement next year, Mr Salinas has already broken a taboo by seeking to integrate his country's economy with its northern neighbour's. Through privatisation and deregulation, he has won the admiration of Mexican big businesses (though not of their smaller brethren). And on September 21st Mexico restored diplomatic relations with the Vatican, after a rupture of more than 130 years.

Mr Salinas promptly went off to deliver a painting of Saint Augustine to a church near Mexico City, whence it had been removed in 1954. He was careful not to offend anti-clericals by joining the incense-swinging faithful in their procession. But the president was on sure political ground. At least nine out of ten Mexicans are baptised Catholics, and the cults of the Virgin of Guadalupe and of the graven images of various saints play a big part in popular culture. For the church, too, the decision was a bonus on the eve of next month's 500th anniversary of its presence in the Americas. Mexico was the only Latin American country to lack relations with the Vatican.

Mexico's anti-clericalism arose from the 19th-century conflict between an immensely rich church (whose legacy is visible still in the enormous number of sumptuous colonial temples in Mexican villages) and weak and impecunious governments. The church committed the fatal error of seeking succour from foreign protectors, in the form of the French invaders who briefly installed Maximilian of Austria as emperor of Mexico in the 1860s. It erred again by backing the bloody and short-lived military dictatorship during the revolution.

Last year Mr Salinas had arranged for an amendment to the 1917 constitution, to give legal recognition to the church. The amendment also reversed provisions banning the church from holding property and running schools, and prohibiting priests from wearing clerical garb in public or voting. The bans had in fact been largely observed in the breach since the 1940s. The church has retained enough influence to prevent attempts to legalise abortion (with the result that hundreds of Mexican women die from illegal abortions every year).

Opposition to Mr Salinas's amendment was muted. The left, having found allies among liberation theologists, was divided. Diehard anti-clericals in the ruling party kept quiet. But some of Mr Salinas's other attempts to change the way Mexicans think—notably by means of reforms of the education system—have fared less well. Or

Most never lost faith

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of these reforms has restored the teaching of Mexican history to the primary-school curriculum. New textbooks were hurriedly commissioned for the new school year, to replace the social-science texts written in the 1970s, when third-world nationalism was at its peak in Mexico.

The new books have ignited an explosion. Critics accuse the government of rewriting Mexican history to conform with the president's policies. They complain in particular that the texts are soft on Porfirio Diaz, who ruled for more than 30 years before the revolution unseated him. Traditionally vilified as a pro-Yankee dictator, he is presented now as a budget-balancing moderniser who brought peace and prosperity before straying in his final years. The fact that Mr Salinas's detractors often compare him to Diaz has spiced the debate.

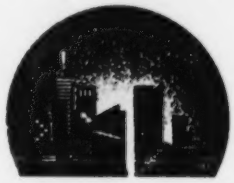
Even the many historians who say that the new books are more balanced than their predecessors criticise the editorialising in favour of the ruling system. To calm the debate, a nervous education ministry has promised the teachers' union that the offending books will be revised after a series of public hearings. Part of the price of modernising Mexico, it seems, is that history must be written by committee.

Two cities: Madrid and Barcelona

Not as different as they look

Our series on odd couples looks at some old clichés about the capitals of Spain and Catalonia, and finds them to be somewhat out of date

A VISITOR from Barcelona arrives at a Madrid government office in mid-afternoon, and is surprised to find only the cleaning lady there. "Don't they work in the afternoons?" he asks. "No," she replies, "they don't work in the mornings. In the afternoons they don't come."



Lazy Madrid, busy Barcelona: it is just one of many stereotypes about Spain's great rivals. Mostly, the stereotypes are born of Barcelona's bitterness at its second-class status. Barcelona—in case you failed to get the message during the Olympic Games this summer—is the capital of Catalonia, a proudly autonomous region, but it has to defer to Madrid as capital of Spain. This rankles. It makes Barcelona the largest city in Western Europe not to be a national capital. Worse, Barcelona (Catalonia's capital since the ninth century) regards Madrid (a creation of Philip II in the 16th century) as an upstart. Catalans rarely miss a chance to have a dig at the folks from Castille.

And, after being bossed about for so long, who can blame them? Over the years centralisers in Madrid did their best to strip Barcelona of political power. They tried to squash the Catalan language. They even determined what the modern city should look like: in 1860 an order from Madrid overruled Barcelona's choice of plan for its big expansion, and opted for the grid layout proposed by Ildefons Cerda.

"We are more liberal, and that explains almost everything," says Miquel Roca, who as parliamentary leader of the Catalan Nationalists spends much of his time shuttling between the two cities. Madrid's "intransigence", as Mr Roca puts it, goes back to the Inquisition, which was resisted in Catalonia. Barcelona has the liberalism that often characterises port cities. As Catalans see it, while Madrid bathes in bureaucracy, Barcelona gets on with business. A certain old-fashioned severity in Madrid, perched in isolation high up on Spain's central plateau, contrasts with the levity of Barcelona, open to Europe and aggressively avant-garde.

Up to a point, these old caricatures still hold true. No visitor to government buildings in the two cities can fail to be struck by the contrast between them. In Madrid, there are creaky wooden floors, antique furniture and walls covered with paintings by Spanish old masters. In Barcelona, the city of Gaudi and Miro, designer chairs and tables are evidence of the place's fetish for modernism. Meetings of the Catalan cabinet are held in a room with a large, distinctly modern painting by Antoni Tapies.

And yet, these days, the similarities between the two cities are at least as striking as the contrasts. Madrid is hardly lazy any more. Visitors do well to keep up with the pace of the place. Nor is it old-fashioned. Indeed, it has become almost outrageously modern, from dress (skirts could hardly get shorter) to drugs (a lot of them about). To judge by the local cuisine, you would think the place was a port: although far from the sea, seafood is a miraculous Madrid specialty. In recent years once-isolationist Madrid has become every bit as fanatical about "Europe" as Barcelona.

As banks and businesses have been drawn to Madrid, it has become as much a commercial and industrial centre as an administrative one. Barcelona, meanwhile, in Spain's traditional industrial heartland, has been experiencing a boom in bureaucracy. This is thanks to the regional autonomy Catalonia has won since Spain's return to democracy in 1975. Like most governments, Catalonia's has been adept at providing jobs for the local boys.

The political life of the two cities now has some piquant parallels. In both places the national government is of a different colour to the city government, leading to much local friction. In Madrid the conservative city administration is a bastion of opposition to Spain's Socialist government led by Felipe Gonzalez. In Barcelona Jordi Pujol, the Catalan Nationalist leader of Catalonia, and Pasqual Maragall, the Socialist city chief, are famous sparring partners. In an ironic reversal of history, Madrid's politics could soon be ripe for a takeover by Catalans: Narcis Serra, a former mayor of Barcelona, is deputy prime minister and a possible successor to Mr Gonzalez, and the Catalan Nationalists might become the power-brokers if the general election due next year produces no clear winner.

None of this means that the rivalry between Madrid and Barcelona is about to disappear. It is bound to remain fierce, not least on the soccer field, where Real Madrid and Barcelona vie for Spanish supremacy. Barcelona will continue to press for yet more power to be devolved to it from Madrid: its latest call (made just after the Olympics finished) is for the Senate, Spain's upper house of parliament, to be moved to the Catalan capital. But with a lot of local autonomy restored, and with the uplifting success of the Olympics behind it, the chip on Barcelona's shoulder is becoming ever harder to detect.

Not-so-severe Madrid

Mexican Rebels Reject Talks, Vow Fight to Death for Socialism

INDIAN REBELS: *The Zapatista Army of National Liberation guards a roadblock near Ibalton, one of the five towns it captured on Jan. 1. The group claims its attacks are the result of years of planning.*

By David Clark Scott
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

ALTAMIRANO, MEXICO

and actions echo the leftist guerrilla movements of the 1980s in Central America.

"We've taken up arms to change the capitalist system that exploits the masses," declares "Comandante Arturo," the 21-year-old masked indigenous leader of a subgroup of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN). The EZLN still controls this rural municipality and a stretch of highway leading to nearby Ocosingo. As of press time Jan. 4, it had withdrawn from two other towns, including San Cristóbal de las Casas, the largest.

Heavy fighting continued in the streets of Ocosingo on Jan. 3. Outside of San Cristóbal, a Mexican journalist was wounded when his vehicle was caught in the crossfire between government and rebel troops. Official government estimates, considered conservative, put the death toll at nearly 100 people since the uprising began Jan. 1.

"The only way to end this war is to get rid of all the rich people and arrive at socialism," says Arturo, who carries a new, sophisticated General Electric walkie-talkie radio and an old but well-kept AK-47 rifle. In a written declaration of war issued earlier this week, the Zapatistas called for the end of the "dictatorship" of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

In this poverty-stricken state of Chiapas, Arturo claims the recent agricultural reforms and general economic policies of this government – including North American Free Trade Agreement – are hurting Mexican *campesinos* (peasants). "The No. 1 problem here is exploitation of the indigenous people. Salinas is selling us out. He's selling Mexican oil, he's selling electricity, he's selling the telephone company. Gringo imperialists are becoming the owners of our country."

The short Indian leader abruptly breaks off his discourse as the drone of three approaching airplanes sends the rebels scurrying for cover beneath nearby trees and the porch of a shuttered roadside restaurant.

Stepping out of the shadows, Arturo answers some of the many questions that have arisen over the emergence of the little-known EZLN. He explains that the Zapatista attacks are the result of years of planning. He claims to have joined the EZLN eight years ago and has trained with his men in secret mountain camps. He flatly rejects the suggestion that the EZLN is in any way connected to or assisted by Guatemalan leftist guerrillas. "We are pure Mexicans," he says.

STAFF

Linda Gutierrez - Christian Science Monitor

The beginnings of the movement

Some 12 miles away, past the burned-out hulks of five trucks and several roadside stands, a jittery "Lieutenent Jesús" agrees to an interview in the central plaza of Altamirano (popuation 10,000). "I joined the EZLN about five years ago, when I found out there was an armed movement," he says. "I did political work – explaining to the campesinos how the government exploits them and that this was a secret organization. Bit by bit we've grown into a force of thousands." Both Jesús and Arturo claim the EZLN is a national organization with support in other states besides Chiapas.

The interview is interrupted by a steady stream of United States-made Mexican Army helicopters thumping past, high overhead, bound for Ocosingo. Beneath the cover of the trees in the central park, Jesús continues, noting that there were seven founders of the organization that began in 1969. In 1983, the EZLN was formed. The army name comes from Emiliano Zapata, a leader from the days of the Mexican Revolution of 1910-17 known by the bullet belts that crisscrossed his chest and his ardent fight to return land to Mexico's indigenous people. "Commander Marcos" is the acknowledged leader of the EZLN now, but is not one of the founding seven, Jesús says.

Dressed in guerrilla garb, a black ski mask, and speaking from the second floor balcony of the town hall in San Cristóbal on Jan. 1, Marcos said one aim of the rebel takeover was to produce a transitional government, because the upcoming presidential elections lacked "the conditions for legitimate and democratic elections." Marcos also said that the taking of five Chiapas towns was "not a classic guerrilla tactic of hit and run, but of hit and advance."

Towns returning to normal

Mexican state and federal government officials emphasized that with a pullout of EZLN forces from the towns of San Cristóbal and Las Margaritas, life in Chiapas is returning to normal. But as Mexican Army troops patrolled downtown San Cristóbal, many merchants kept their shops closed. "Even with the soldiers, people are afraid of looting. They're not sure this is over yet," says one drug store owner who was open on Jan. 1.

On Jan. 4, government officials planned to visit Chiapas to set up a commission that would develop new programs to combat the root causes of the conflict: poverty, poor health, and insufficient land. But Secretary of Social Development Carlos Rojas noted that Chiapas is already the No. 1 recipient of funds from the federal Solidarity antipoverty program, receiving 8 percent of the total national disbursement. The state has only 4 percent of the national population.

Top Mexican officials also continue to advocate a peacefully negotiated solution to the crisis. Three local Roman Catholic bishops have been invited by the government to try to mediate negotiations.

But the EZLN, or at least these two EZLN commanders, reject negotiations. "We have agreed among ourselves not to negotiate. We've seen what happened in El Salvador when they negotiated. We won't make the same mistake," Arturo says. It's not clear yet whether the EZLN has the military power or civilian support to sustain a civil war here, but Jesús insists "Communism is the best system. This won't be like Guatemala or El Salvador. We will die fighting for it."

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Armed Struggle

The Zapatista Uprising

By Robin Hahnel and Susan Fleck

The New International Order marches victorious on every continent: Corporations abuse their expanded freedoms by buying up assets denied them in the past at bargain basement prices, pitting more desperate workers against less desperate workers, and inviting governments to bid for jobs and foreign exchange with tax abatements and lax environmental and health and safety standards—in short, by creating a "favorable business climate." Politicians join the fray by competing with one another to betray their electoral constituents' economic security to satiate the appetites of their financial backers, and competing to see who can shed the most crocodile tears over the moral angst they suffer in their valiant, but losing battle with the merciless yet benevolent god of "competitiveness." And indigenous cultures are increasingly threatened by the Eurocentric information highway. The rout is on in the former Soviet Empire, China, and Africa, and the lowest common denominator effect is haunting Europe and the United States as well. But no region is more special to the New International Order than Mesoamerica where the heirs of Sandino and Farabundo Marti have been bludgeoned into submission. Whether the heirs of Emiliano Zapata will suffer the same fate we shall see.

The Spanish Empire crushed two great civilizations in the new world—one based in the Andean region, the other in Mexico and Central America. Unlike the descendants of the Incas, Chimus, and Amaras in South America where an indigenous rebellion led by Tupacamaru II against the European colonizers was defeated, the descendants of the Aztecs and Mayans partially succeeded in reclaiming their land, culture, and heritage in the political movement that led to the government of Benito Juarez in the mid-19th century. But the gains of indigenous peasants in Mexico had been largely eroded by the early 20th century during the long, tyrannical regime of Porfirio Diaz. Emiliano Zapata was the heart and soul of the 1910 Mexican Revolution that overthrew the Diaz government. An illiterate peasant from south of Mexico City, Zapata fought for "land to the tiller" and the communal land-management system known as the "ejido" against large scale private ownership. When the Revolutionary government reneged on its promises, Zapata renounced his position and returned to southern Mexico to defend what he and his peasant army had won, only to be assassinated by government forces in 1919.

While indigenous peasants in Mexico fared better than those in Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua from 1920 through the 1970s, the commitment to an egalitarian, communal, indigenous agrarian system died with Zapata. The revival of the ejido system and protection for small scale agriculture under Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s gave way to successively more corrupt Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) governments, culminating in the present government of Carlos Salinas de Gortari. His presidential initiative in 1992 modified Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution eliminating the legal category of communal land and permitting foreign ownership of Mexican land. However, the people of the region defended their rights and heritage on the dawn of the North American Free Trade Agreement. On January 1 the Zapatista National Liberation Army launched an uprising in the poorest state in Mexico with the highest percentage of indigenous inhabitants.

Mainstream press accounts provide more than enough information to identify the causes behind the uprising in Chiapas—poverty, oppression, discrimination, exploitation, and hopelessness—and to assess the nature of the Mexican government's response—subterfuge and repression.

Under the headline "Slaves and Guerrillas, Forests and Blood" the *New York Times* certified that "today Chiapas is the poorest state in Mexico. In Ocosigno, Altamirano and Las Margaritas—the towns where the Zapatista Army of National Liberation burst to prominence on New Years Day—48 percent of the adults are illiterate. Eighty percent of the families earn less than $245 a month. Seventy percent have no electricity. In the midst of all this are timber and oil resources that are all too vulnerable to exploitation. Despite official decrees of protection, the great Lacandon rain forest has been shorn—for highways, farms, oil drilling, resettlement, even airstrips for drug traffickers—to the bare minimum necessary to keep its ecosystems from collapsing. Just 30 percent of the original 5,000 square miles remains. What once took 50 years to destroy can now be destroyed in a year. And with the disappearance of the forest, the Indian populations have been despoiled, losing their traditions and native land, they have become pariahs. There were 12,000 people in the Lacandon in 1960, now there are more than 300,000." (*New York Times* 1/5/94)

In the January 7 Commentary section of the *Los Angeles Times*, Mexico's Nobel laureate, Octavio Paz, offers an apt summary of life in Chiapas: "In Chiapas, modern life has come about late and poorly. It has not freed the peasants or improved their living conditions. Further, the transformation of the traditional culture and the old hierar-

chies has emphasized the terrible social and cultural inequities. The peasant population—which mainly descends from one of the most glorious pre-Hispanic peoples, the Mayas—has been subjected for centuries to much humiliation, discrimination and disgrace. For years and years, its cries were not heard by the wealthy class—the parties primarily responsible for the chronic damage done to the peasant peoples—or by government."

Martin Andersen writes in the *Los Angeles Times* on January 6: "No one should have been surprised by the uprising in Chiapas, Mexico's poorest state and the site of long-running violations against the human rights of native peoples and a virtual assault by large landowners against the small agricultural holdings that are the life blood of the indigenous communities."

Todd Robbertson confirms that "in Chiapas in recent years, wealthy Mexican landowners have forced thousands of Indians from communal farmlands." (*Washington Post* 1/6) Jeffrey Rubin adds some substance: "In Chiapas, the intensification of profitable logging and livestock enterprises in the 1980s, which will accelerate under the North American Free Trade Agreement, made it harder and harder for already poor people to survive. The collapse of world coffee prices has made the situation even more desperate." (*New York Times* 1/7)

Rubin also provides an insightful interpretation of the Mexican government's response to resistance: "In response to this impoverishment, peasants have become active in nonviolent grass-roots political movements. Supported by Chiapas' Roman Catholic bishops, these organizations fought to defend people's land and livelihood, develop innovative economic projects and secure democratic political rights. But as the government has encouraged deregulation and rapid economic transformation in Chiapas, state officials have stepped up repression of peasants' organizations that have resisted those policies. Preoccupied with furthering the free trade agenda (and with convincing other nations that ordinary Mexicans supported NAFTA), the authorities failed to address local grievances, disrupted political meetings and jailed and tortured peasant leaders. The nonviolent movements that had grown in the 1980s stalled, and armed forms of opposition increased—finally, to the point of rebellion. In Chiapas, moves toward economic expansion were accompanied by increased repression, and now brutal military violence."

Excerpts from the report of the Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights provide the most vivid account of Mexican government policy. Seven months *before* the January uprising, the human rights team visited Chiapas and affirmed reports that soldiers and police officers had beaten, tortured, and illegally detained civilians even though government officials then categorically denied the existence of any armed guerrilla activity in Chiapas.

"In Chiapas, on March 28-29, 1993, following the disappearance and presumed killing of two soldiers, approximately 400 soldiers and a handful of police arbitrarily detained, searched and beat civilians in two Tzotzil villages. Police tortured a number of those detained. On April 25, about 200 police returned to the same village, searched and looted homes, and again interrogated and tortured villagers. On May 8, some 400 police in at least 47 vehicles returned to the village, only to find it had been deserted. When the Minnesota team visited the village of San Isidro on May 25, it was still entirely deserted. A third incident occurred while the Minnesota team was in Chiapas. On May 24, 500 to 1000 soldiers detained the entire Tzeltal population of Patate Viejo for two hours while they conducted house-to-house searches."

Minnesota Advocates interviews document various instances of torture and coercion by police before the current uprising. Anc events of 1993 are consiste mainstream press accounts rent government repression sponse to the uprising. In ar posted from Ocosingo, Mex published in the *Los Angele* Wednesday, January 5, Juani ling states: "The first group porters to enter Ocosingo si fighting began Jan. 1 in C found a total of 25 bodies. of guerrillas but also includi of a baby. Five bodies showe of execution, lying face dow row with their hands behin backs." Todd Robbertson re "The bodies of five young las were lined up inside a the market, with their han their sides and bullet holes i heads. American journalists w spected the bodies closely sai wrists showed abrasions from ing been previously bound an pieces of twine were strewn the ground around them. A se wounded rebel lay in a ditch pistol still at his side. He breathing heavily but appea be unconscious and bleeding the head. Soldiers nearby ma attempt to render first aid." "Diplomats and others chall the army's methods in hu down rebels after several re incidents of executions, strafi areas occupied by indigenous ers and killings of noncombat (*Washington Post* 1/5)

Robbertson reported fron Corralito in an article titled " ico Attacks by Air, Offers Ten Rebels" (*Washington Post* "The Mexican government of rebels a stiff cease-fire propos day and attacked supposed gue positions around this mountain lage with warplanes firing ro and machine guns. The go ment's cease-fire plan, which tantamount to a demand for su der, called for an immediate e hostilities, surrender of all w onry, freedom for all persons napped or taken prisoner, imm ate return of stolen dynamite,

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identification of all guerrilla leaders and interlocutors."

In the post-cold war era, where those who take up arms can no longer be dismissed as agents of international communism, the Mexican government is desperately searching for someone to blame. Mexican government officials are making every effort to portray the guerrillas as foreign provocateurs duping innocent peasants. Robbertson reports that government spokesperson Eloy Cantu "described Comandante Marcos as a foreigner with blond hair and blue eyes who speaks four languages, and told reporters that the direction of this attack is in the hands of professionals of violence." (*Washington Post* 1/6) In the same article Robbertson states that "nearly all guerrillas encountered by journalists have appeared to be Indian. All dead and wounded rebels seen by reporters, as well as hundreds of rebels holding positions in seized rural areas, have had physical features characteristic of Mayan tribes that heavily populate southern Mexico." And: "The military has acknowledged capturing only one foreigner during its entire campaign, an unidentified Guatemalan it said was taken prisoner today outside the southern border town of Las Margaritas."

The situation in southern Mexico has changed little from when Emiliano Zapata responded by taking up arms. In 1910 a moribund, corrupt Diaz regime addicted to canceling election results they could not fix, aided wealthy Mexican landlords in evictions of peasants from their land. The dispossessed of 1910 had no recourse but armed self-defense. And in 1910 a young, aggressive power was perched on a long northern border.

In 1994 PRI governments regularly resort to election fraud and strongarm tactics in support of elites. The threat to indigenous communities and fragile ecosystems they inhabit is more acute, and the prospects for Mexico's tens of millions of poor peasant farmers are more desperate. Land that previously was not worth pushing peasants off has become valuable now that it can be resold to foreign agribusiness and timber companies. Peasants who used to be able to make ends meet will go bankrupt at increasing rates now that their crops are subject to competition from U.S. agribusiness. And, in 1994, there is an aging superpower that has feathered its perch on the northern border with an international treaty granting it legal rights to swoop down and enforce one sided agreements should any future Mexican government be reluctant to do so. The Salinas government's response to the uprising in Chiapas demonstrates that it is more than willing to play henchman role for now.

In the past, it has proven difficult to shake Mexican peasants off their land, in no small part due to the insights, courage, and legacy of Emiliano Zapata and his followers. Whether the late 20th century Zapatistas will prove worthy of their namesake, and whether their efforts to establish an egalitarian, communal, ecologically sound agrarian system, respectful of the rights and traditions of the indigenous population will prove more or less successful, remains to be seen. Z

Susan Fleck is a Central American Solidarity Activist and graduate student in political economy at American University. Robin Hahnel is professor of political economy at American University.

News Beat

The New Solidarity

By David Peterson

The leaders of the freshly minted European Union (nee the Community) couldn't have tripped and fallen into a better site for last December's summit, Brussels. The Belgian capital. The EU's administrative center. And (last but not least) the working address of Belgium Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene, whose coalition government of Socialists and his own Christian Democrats recently won the parliament's backing to help it push the country's most sweeping austerity measures since World War II into law.

Negotiations in October between Belgium's trade unions, its employers' federations, and the government had broken down almost as soon as they began. When the unions withdrew from Dehaene's "social pact" talks to end Belgium's recession and restore local capital's "international competitiveness" (sound familiar?), Dehaene simply went ahead without them. His decision led to an escalating series of strikes—culminating in the first general strike Belgium had seen since 1936, crippling transportation, shipping, the postal service and the public schools, and even managing to close down the offices of a few supranationals, BASF, Bayer, and GM included. Autumn in Europe would also witness lesser protests in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Britain, and elsewhere. "There is no objective reason why what is happening in France and Italy will not happen here as well," a member of one of the Spanish employers' groups said of the many demonstrations then taking place on the continent.

The turmoil that resulted from the general strike in Belgium threw the governing coalition's popularity into the garbage can, with three-quarters of the respondents to one poll agreeing that the entire government should call it quits and resign. Dehaene's austerity package would freeze the level of the country's real wages for at least the next three years; reduce the government's contributions to its welfare, healthcare and pension funds, adopting new

Mexico Pacified, Mexico Insurgent

Not a single step backward until the final victory

By Jon Reed

The one-party state and the absurdities that pass for validity and constitutionality... the hereditary dictatorship. The electoral fraud, elevated from the image of computerized alchemy to the status of a national monument. Misery and ignorance as the historical vocation of the dispossessed. Democracy washed with imported detergent and the water cannons of anti-riot tanks. This National Convention brings us together in a dialogue—those with their faces covered by masks and carrying arms, and those unarmed and faceless in civil society. Encountering a common cause and reuniting what has been fragmented, we will provoke and stimulate a Movement that will put an end to this shameful page of Mexican history.

—Zapatista Sub-Commandante Marcos, speaking to 6,000 activists at the Convencion Nacional Democratico (CND) in the jungle of Chiapas, August 8, 1994

Primera Vuelta: Before the Elections

Mexico City. Saturday, August 13. The gigantic closing campaign rally of opposition Presidential candidate Cardenas and Mexico's left-progressive coalition, the Partido Revolutionario Democratico (PRD). From the Zocalo, the central plaza, the steady roar of 250,000 demonstrators reverberates against the massive stone walls and barred gates of the National Palace and the Cathedral. "Down with the PRI!" "Viva Cardenas!" and "Marcos, Marcos!" From the second floor windows of the Palacio Nacional, a stone's throw from the edge of the crowd, soldiers in full combat gear, cradling automatic weapons, are monitoring the demonstration. In front of the Cathedral, a man in a white shirt and dark sunglasses spray-paints anti-government slogans alongside an enormous poster of Emiliano Zapata. Several popular leaders of the Mexican left deliver sharply-worded speeches: Concepcion Calvilla de Nava, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, and Porfirio Munoz Ledo. Munoz Ledo, PRD Senator from the Federal District, galvanizes the crowd as he shouts into the microphone: "There is no worse violence than fraud, and no greater source of violence than an illegitimate government."

But as informed analysts have emphasized, the electoral fraud has already occurred. Cardenas and the PRD are fighting a lopsided battle against a vicious one-party state, the Partido Revolutionario Institutional (PRI), that has earned its reputation as Latin America's "perfect dictatorship." Outspent 300-600 to one in the campaign, victimized by a 6-year misinformation campaign in the monopoly and state-dominated mass media, betrayed by a pseudo-opposition party, the Partido Accion Nacional (PAN), whose job is to confuse the

PRD supporters; Mark Ludak, Impact Visuals

public and to take votes away from the genuine opposition, the Cardenistas are facing off against an enemy that intends to annihilate them. Every voter survey since January indicates that the fear of government-sanctioned recrimination, along with the fear of violence and civil disorder, are weighing heavily on the minds of the country's 46 million registered voters. The January Zapatista insurrection in Chiapas was just a preliminary tremor, an unmistakable warning that the entire nation is precariously perched on the slopes of a political and economic volcano.

Mexico has arrived at its year of living dangerously. The body politic recognize that there are deadly conspiracies afoot: drug cartel gunmen, aided and abetted by the federal police, brazenly murdered a Catholic Cardinal, Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo in the Guadalajara airport in May of 1993; while just five months ago ruling party hard-liners and drug traffickers engineered the assassination of the PRI Presidential candidate, Luis Donaldo Colosio, apparently for straying from the party/Mafia line. Meanwhile 250 PRD activists have been killed since 1988, while thousands of other grassroots leaders have been threatened, harassed, or assaulted. This week in the capital, PRD offices and homes have been burglarized, and death threats have proliferated. A new right-wing terror group, "Squadrons for the Defense of the Catholic Faith and Peace in Mexico" has posted fliers near church buildings and PRI government offices stating: "Jesuits! Now is Enough! No more treason against the Fatherland. In El Salvador thousands of indigenous people died before the Jesuits did who were responsible for the massacre. In Mexico the Jesuits will die first."

The bulk of Mexico's 40 million indigenous and poor people, a full one-half of the population, along with a surprisingly sizable percentage of the middle class, seem to sympathize with the cry for justice of the Zapatista Indian rebels in Chiapas, but they are nonetheless fearful of generalized violence and political repression. Still fresh in the minds of many are the harsh government crackdowns on the Mexican worker and student movements of 1968-1975, when thousands were killed or imprisoned. In poll after poll Mexicans reveal their contradictory feelings: their economic situation has grown worse, the ruling party is crooked and corrupt, government and police-sanctioned drug cartels are growing stronger every day, the elections will be fraudulent as always, the country desperately needs a change, and yet paradoxically a majority or near-majority still say they plan to vote for the PRI.

As PRI candidate Cardenas approaches the podium, the applause and cheering are tremendous. As even the American Embassy now acknowledges, Cardenas actu-

ally won the 1988 Presidential election, but PRI mapaches (Mexican slang for raccoon, or one who works in secret to rig elections) crashed the computers, doctored the vote in 45 percent of voter precincts without opposition party observers (these ballots were later burned), and proclaimed the PRI's Salinas as President. Six years later Cardenas is back, and this time he warns the PRI to watch their step. If they steal the elections again, Cardenas vows there will be massive and prolonged civil resistance.

According to the most rigorous analysis of the 1988 fraud (Jose Berberan et al., *Radiografia del Fraude: Analisis de los datos oficiales del 6 de julio*) Cardenas actually won the election with 41-42 percent of the vote, Salinas from the PRI was second with 36-37 percent, and the right-wing PAN candidate came in third. According to the PRI spin doctors, Salinas got 51.1 percent; Cardenas 29 percent, and the PAN 18 percent. But of course it's been Salinas, not Cardenas, who has occupied the Presidential mansion, Los Pinos, for the last six years. During this time Salinas has become quite a favorite of the White House and the transnational corporations, endorsing NAFTA and GATT and engineering a neo-liberal restructuring of the Mexican economy. As a reward, international power brokers have recently nominated Salinas for the post of President of the GATT's World Trade Organization.

Cardenas delivers an impassioned 45-minute speech, outlining the PRD program. He calls for full representation for the Mexico City Federal District in the national legislature; for more direct elections of public officials; for citizens' referendums; for the decentralization and democratization of the economy; for biodiversity and environmental protection and the development of a sustainable economy; for job creation; mass transit; tax and housing reform; demilitarization; income redistribution; an end to corruption, fraud, drug trafficking, media monopolies, and human rights violations; respect for indigenous, workers, and women's rights; increasing funds for education, health, and social welfare; and the development of an equitable system of international trade. Cardenas makes repeated references to the just struggle of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, and each time the crowd roars its approval.

One can easily grasp why 97 percent of the country's business elite recently vowed that they will not vote for Cardenas. This explains why the PRI was able to raise several billion dollars for their campaign (Mexico's new electoral law prohibits parties from spending more than $42 million) in comparison to the PRD war chest of $3.6 million. It also explains why the nation's television monopolies, Televisa (controlling 85 percent of the market) and Azteca, as well as the radio networks, are slandering Cardenas and eulogizing Ernesto Zedillo, the PRI candidate. One understands perfectly why U.S., Japanese, and European financial counselors are predicting a flood of foreign investment once Zedillo trounces the left. And just to guarantee that investors enjoy "stability," the U.S. Army has recently initiated secret training of Mexican combat troops in Guatemala, according to an August 17 report in *La Jornada*, Mexico's independent daily newspaper.

All four PRD speakers predict a victory for their party on August 21. But they also admit that they expect a dirty battle, a guerra sucia. The PRI, "the party of fear," has "kidnapped the country," manipulating billions of dollars in social welfare funds and government resources to coerce or coopt the voters. All of the government's workers and bureaucrats, several million PRI "volunteers" and mapaches, are being pressed into service. Every voter in the country is being approached by government representatives, either by mail or visits at home and at work. Welfare checks are being held up, and employers are demanding to see their workers' voter registration cards. Several million workers and campesinos who are members of PRI-controlled unions will be rounded up next Sunday, transported to the polls, and later rewarded for their loyalty.

The ruling party, despite a number of highly publicized reforms in the Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE)—a strategic public relations maneuver which cost the PRI $750 million—still overwhelmingly controls and manipulates the electoral apparatus. No one but the IFE/PRI electoral officials, by law, can get into the computer centers or examine the packets of ballots that will arrive in the fortress-like headquarters after the elections. Between the period that precinct officials count the ballots at the local level, and IFE/PRI computer centers tabulate the "results," no one outside of the government will know what's going on.

In other words there is no legal way to know whether ballots are altered, destroyed, annulled, or replaced on the way to the IFE center. Perhaps more important there is no way to know whether the data in the IFE computer actually corresponds to the vote tally contained in the precinct packets. According to a Mexico electoral analyst in Washington, DC, Christopher Whalen, whose firm has represented both the PRD and the PAN, the PRI will need to steal or manufacture at least five million votes to guarantee a sweeping victory; to suppress the PRD vote as much as possible (in order to reduce the number of PRD representative in the national legislature); and to allow PAN to get enough votes so that they will not contest the fraud.

Since 70,000 observers will be present (supposedly chosen at random, actually selected, for the most part by the PRI) at many or most of the casillas, it will be necessary to manipulate the vote as much as possible in rural and semi-rural areas, as well as to carry out a more sophisticated "microfraud" precinct-by-precinct

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Tres Nudos organization; Mark Ludak, Impact Visuals

in the cities. The voter registration rolls have been significantly altered (rasurados or shaved) ever since 1991. Up to 8 million voters (16 percent) deemed likely to vote against the PRI have been eliminated from the padron or voter list, while up to 4.5 million phantom voters have been added to the rolls. An analysis of the voter registration list has revealed that millions of voters have exactly the same name as one or more others on the padron. In rural areas like Chiapas, a full 35 percent of the registered voters are found to have duplicates. Although the PRI and so-called independent IFE officials claim that this is a coincidence, analysts point out that not only were a suspiciously large percentage of the voters with duplicate names born in the same month; but that they tended to register in the same month as well.

These "coincidences" however did not deter a U.S. auditing firm with longtime ties to the PRI, McKinsey and Co., from certifying the electoral rolls as "97 percent accurate." Subsequently the United Nations observer team, criticized for accepting $5 million dollars in payment for the PRI for "verifying" the elections, said that they basically agreed with the 97 percent accuracy figure. The U.S. Embassy also assured the press that they believed the voter registration list was reliable. At the close of the rally in the Zocalo, PRD leaders warn the crowd once more to be vigilant on August 21.

Segunda Vuelta: Election Day

Sunday, August 21. Election Day. Driving through the conflict zone in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost state. At 6:30 AM arriving by taxi at the first of several military roadblocks, a soldier motions to stop the car. "Where are you going?" Compared to the 50 soldiers stationed here yesterday, the zone is only lightly guarded. As it turns out nearly the whole battalion have been ordered to go out and vote at Nuevo Rancho, or other nearby voting precincts. The driver tells the soldier we're headed for Oxchuc, a rural municipio which lies on the edge of Zapatista territory. In Oxchuc, the villagers seem happy to see international observers. They explain that the Zapatistas came through their town in mid-January. Then the army came on January 20. Francisco Dominguez, a schoolteacher, says "It was terrible. Homes and our community association office were destroyed. The army said that all of us were guilty. Fourteen people were arrested. In March a member of our village association was murdered by an unknown assassin with a machete."

Tzeltal Indians voting; Mark Ludak, Impact Visuals

In the town center of Oxchuc at 7:30 there are already 500-600 indigenous people lined up to vote. The mestizo PRI caciques, election officials, and poll watchers stand out in the crowd. They don't seem very pleased to see the four Alianza Civica monitors—the most sizable nationally organized independent observation group. In Chiapas the Alianza is monitoring 339 casillas, approximately 10 percent of the total in the state. Nationwide the Alianza has managed to place 12,000 people at approximately 2200 voting precincts. The only real hope for monitoring the fraud nationwide however is the PRD, who optimistically claim they will have party members today present in over 70,000 precincts. The right-wing PAN party also has poll watchers stationed in almost half of the country's precincts, although informed sources in the capital say PAN's candidate and the PRI have already cut a deal to divide the spoils.

After an hour delay people are able to start voting. The first vote cast is not that encouraging. An old man with classic gray mustache, sombrero, and a cane, unable to read or write, grasps his ballot and stares at it in confusion. Emerging from the voting booth, a flimsy plastic and aluminum structure, with a sign on the side that says "Your Vote is Free and Secret," the old man attempts unsuccessfully to put his ballot through the ridiculously small slit in the white plastic ballot box, which is encircled by a half-dozen frowning PRI mapaches. They and everyone else can see clearly that he has placed his "X" in the box of the PAN party—very likely because it's the first box that appears on the ballot.

Things start to improve after this, although it is obvious that everyone is a bit nervous, since every move they make is being observed by PRI thugs. At least half the people fail to fold over their ballots properly as they leave the voting booth or else have trouble placing their votes in the urn, so the mapaches and everyone else can see who they voted for. As if this isn't enough, the PRI election officials keep poking their heads into the voting booths and talking to people while they're trying to mark their ballots. The only good thing about all this is that the majority of people still seem to be voting for the PRD. Another interesting anomaly is that a number of people in line are presenting their "tamper-proof" picture ID voting cards to the precinct officials, only to be told that their names do not appear on the registered voter list. Several arguments break out over why their names have become rasurados, or shaved from the list. At this rate, by the time the precinct closes, perhaps a hundred or more people, likely identified by local mapaches as "unreli-

Voting booth; Mark Ludak, Impact Visuals

able," will have similarly been denied the right to vote. I notice several voters break into line who appear to be on rather friendly terms with the electoral officials. These people's names are not being checked off the voter registration list, and yet they are being given ballots. Multiply this microfraud by 25-96,000 casillas and you start to understand why the PRI seems to always win.

At another casilla a block away in a school yard, where the voting officials are clearly not members of the PRI, the indigenous voters are being treated with respect, their questions are being answered in either Spanish or Tzeltal, and the flow of voters is smooth and efficient. Since only a few people seem concerned about keeping their marked ballots concealed, I can see that 90 percent of the ballots are marked for Cardenas and the PRD candidate for governor who barely survived an attempt to assassinate him a month ago.

Ten kilometers down the road toward Ocosingo, where a fierce battle took place between the Zapatistas and the Mexican army in January, we get out of the taxi in Bumilj. Hundreds of indigenous people are sweating in the sun, standing in line to vote, women, many holding children, in one line, men in another line. Everyone is staring at us as if they've never seen gringos before. No one seems to be speaking Spanish except for the PRI caciques who are running the casilla. They are herding the Indians toward the voting table like cattle. We are not allowed to get close enough to photograph the table where the balloting is taking place, but it's clear what's going on. Everyone is voting, but in an hour only two people get to enter the voting booths. Everyone else has to mark their ballot on the table, under the watchful eyes of the cacique. Then the officiales take their marked ballots and place them in the voting urns for them. After the people vote for the PRI, they are led to a table where a man grabs their right hand and marks their thumb with what is supposedly indelible ink. Above the village on a hill is a large pink house with a huge satellite dish on top. Every other house in the area is little more than a shack. A schoolteacher tells me that the casa grande belongs to the PRI mayor. "Everyone here will vote for the PRI," he says with a tone of resignation.

On the way back to San Cristobal de las Casas, there are still long lines in front of all the casillas. The radio reports rioting in the state capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez, where a large group of people were not allowed to vote. There are more soldiers and riot police on the streets than this morning. In the Zocalo in San Cristobal, hundreds of registered voters—young people, middle class people, and Chamulan Indians—have

sequestered the casilla and several officials. They are threatening to burn the ballots, like a group of campesinos in Tapachula did earlier today, unless they are allowed to vote. The IFE bureaucrats explain that there is nothing they can do, this is a casilla especial and only 300 people are allowed to vote.

At San Juan Chamula, an Indian village of 42,000 people in the mountains above San Cristobal, the polls close at six o'clock, and then the votes are counted. The Chamulan caciques are 100 percent PRI. Over the last 20 years they have expelled thousands of Chamulans, mainly Evangelical Protestants, who have questioned their corrupt municipal government and authoritarian practices. This week 500 expelled Chamulans are trying to return to their former lands. The caciques have threatened to kill them. Arriving at the town center there are over a dozen international observers standing around. The first batch of votes are 207 for the PRI and 7 for the PAN. The local caciques have promised the newly appointed PRI governor (the previous governor was removed after the Zapatista uprising), Elmer Setzer, that all of San Juan Chamula's 14,000 ballots will be marked for the PRI, and none for the PRD.

At mass in the Cathedral after the polls close, Bishop Samuel Ruiz, unquestioned leader of left and progressive Catholics in Chiapas and chief mediator between the Zapatista rebels and the national government, states in his sermon that "we demand from the authorities fundamental change, an end to injustice, and a transformation of society and human relations." Padre Samuel and the rest of us only have to wait for a few hours for a response to his "demand" from the authorities. Just before midnight the first "official results" on the national elections start to arrive at the Press Center in San Cristobal: an unbelievable landslide victory for the PRI of approximately 50 percent, the PAN in second place with about 30 percent, and the PRD with an unbelievably low 15 percent. In Chiapas the government claims that the PRI came in first with 48 percent and the PRD came in second with 34 percent. The Chiapas PRD, the national PRD, and the Alianza all announce that a massive fraud is unfolding once again, and that they will be holding demonstrations and press conferences all over the country tomorrow.

Tercera Vuelta: After the Elections

Street demonstrations, road blockades, seizures of municipal buildings, plantones (encampments in front of government offices), citizens' arrests of election officials, and a variety of other protests and civil disobedience erupt across the country. There are opposition party protests in all 32 states, as well as Mexico City. In the states of Guerrero, Tabasco, Oaxaca, Chiapas, Morelos, Michoacan, Mexico, Hidalgo, Veracruz, and in the capital—the strongholds of the PRD—sizable and militant actions take place. Army troops and police fire their weapons to disperse demonstrators in Guerrero (where two PRD activists are kidnapped), Oaxaca, and Tabasco, and riot police clash with student demonstrators in Mexico City. In the north of Mexico, the media report that PAN and PRD protests have taken place in every state, with those in Sonora, Nuevo Leon, Durango, Tamaulipas, Guanajuato, Queretaro, Baja California and Zacatecas being the most notable.

By Saturday August 26, both the Alianza Civica and the EZLN, the Zapatista National Liberation Army denounce the PRI for stealing the elections. Among other election violations, the Alianza Civica points out that in 20-40 percent of the casillas the vote was not secret; that voters were pressured to vote for the PRI in at least 20 percent of the precincts; that there were more votes tallied than there were ballots handed out in 20 of Mexico's 32 states; that up to 20 percent of all ballots were annulled; that people were allowed to vote who were not on the voting list or who had already voted; that in 71 percent of the casillas people with voting cards were turned away because their names had been taken off of the lists; and that after five days, during which time the IFE claimed they had all the votes counted, there were still 11,000 voting precincts with "undetermined" results.

The Zapatista communique states that thousands of people in their liberated zones were denied the right to vote because of a deliberate shortage of ballots; that intercepted radio communications between every municipality in Chiapas and the state PRI headquarters in Tuxtla revealed that the PRD candidate for governor had received twice as many votes as the PRI, whereas the "official results" said that the PRI beat the PRD 48 percent to 34 percent; that people received bribes to vote for the PRI; and that people, including Guatemalan refugees, were rounded up on election day and coerced into voting for the PRI. The Zapatistas also point out that the major part of the fraud had already taken place before the elections—the manipulation of state resources, altering the voting rolls, media misinformation, etc. The EZLN ended their communique by calling on the public to organize themselves to defend the PRD electoral victory in Chiapas and not to allow their dignity and sovereignty to be taken away from them. The army, they note, are complicit in the electoral fraud, and as a consequence, all EZLN guerrilla units are put on alert.

On Saturday August 27, the PRD once again fills the Zocalo, this time with 100,000 people. Simultaneously rallies and street marches are taking place all over the country. Although shell-shocked at the magni-

PRD candidate Dominic L. Angel; Mark Ludak, Impact Visuals

tude of the fraud, fists are held aloft and the talk is of civil resistance. Munoz Ledo sums up the contradictory mood of millions six days after the elections: "Rage and frustration, sadness and bitterness, stupor and confusion, courage and conformity." After admitting that no one for the moment can actually know the exact dimensions of the fraud, he says "the only thing for certain is that in Mexico there is no joy, there is no satisfaction, even on the part of those who say that they have won."

Cardenas climbs to the podium. People are clapping, cheering, screaming, crying. "This is the end of my candidacy," he says "but it is not the end of the struggle." In a one-hour speech Cardenas enumerates the judicial, political, and organizational tasks that lie ahead for the PRD. He warns movement activists not to fall into the trap of provoking the police and the military. He calls for the creation of "truth councils" in every community who will gather the specific evidence, casilla-by-casilla of the election fraud. "Then," he says, "We will resist in a positive manner. We do not want anyone to despair. We are not going home. We are not going to make a gift of the Republic, nor allow them to expropriate our hopes and dreams. We will not allow the PRI to privatize our democracy nor to sell Mexico to their business partners both inside and outside the country."

The rally closes as always with the singing of the National Hymn. Many of those in and around the speakers' platform and in the crowd are crying.

At a crowded and boisterous working class cantina about a mile from the Zocalo some of the important leaders of the PRD and the Zapatista-inspired Convencion Democratico Nacional (CND) are packed around wooden tables, drinking dark Mexican beer and rum "Cubas." As Mexico's most famous human rights activist and President of the CND, Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, comes into the cantina, the people in bar rise to their feet and applaud. After political discussion, jokes, and anecdotes about what we've all witnessed, everyone at our table toasts a New Internationale among the simpatico activists of our respective countries: Mexico, Canada, and the U.S. Across the room Rosario Ibarra interrupts the Marachi musicians, stands up on her chair, and delivers a message: "Companeros and companeras, we are neither defeated nor disheartened. We must go back to our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our markets, our schools and continue the struggle. Form our truth councils, annul the fraudulent elections, strengthen the CND, and advance forward. "Ni un paso detras, hasta la victoria siempre!" (Not a single step backward until the final victory.)

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PART FOUR

THE FIVE NATIONS OF MEXICO

PART III

REGIONAL DIVERSITY AND GEOGRAPHY

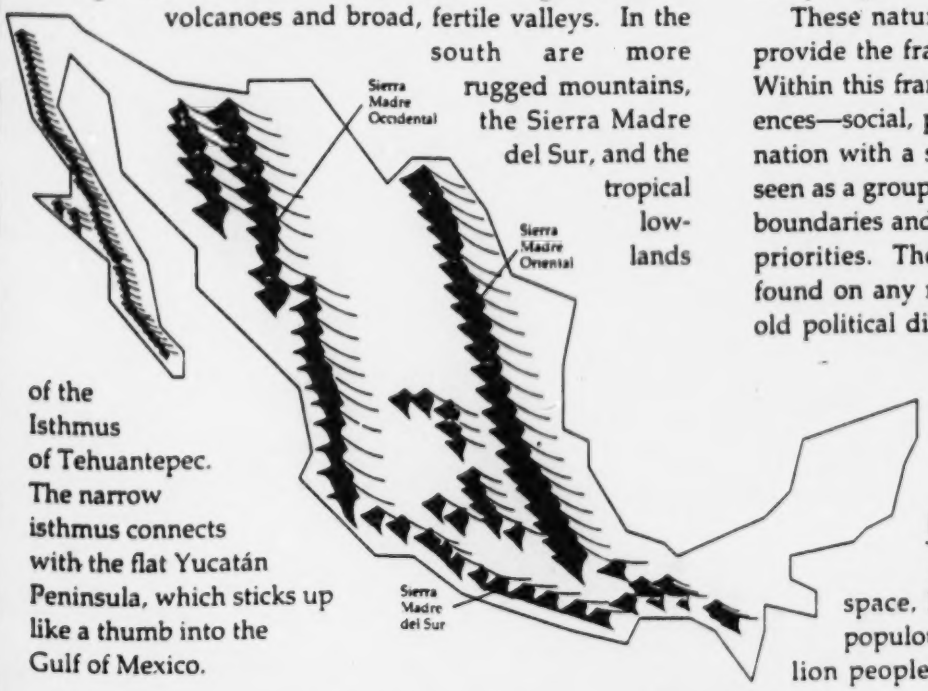
by Louis B. Casagrande and Sylvia A. Johnson

Descriptions of Mexico can vary greatly: "Mexico is a developed country with a highly educated population and the twelfth largest economy in the world." "Mexico is an underdeveloped country with more than 50% of its population under the age of 19, a high birth rate, and nearly 40% of its population earning less than US$500 per month." What is the real Mexico of the 1990s?

To understand modern Mexico, we need to understand the *diversity* of Mexico and its people. Just as writers and scholars have identified profound regional differences in the United States and Canada, we have to recognize the regional differences that make up Mexico today.

A Complex Geography

These regional differences have their roots in Mexico's rugged and complex geography. When Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conquistador, invaded Mexico in the 1500s, he described the landscape as resembling a crumpled piece of paper. Today as in the past, high mountain ranges and isolated valleys separate groups of people from each other. In the north, the Sierra Madre Occidental and the Sierra Madre Oriental form a kind of "wishbone" with the open end pointing toward the US border. These mountain ranges create natural barriers between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts and the high plateaus in the interior of the country. Another mountain range extends east-west through Mexico's middle. Within this range are active volcanoes and broad, fertile valleys. In the south are more rugged mountains, the Sierra Madre del Sur, and the tropical lowlands of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The narrow isthmus connects with the flat Yucatán Peninsula, which sticks up like a thumb into the Gulf of Mexico.



As might be expected, Mexico's varied landscape creat great variations in climate and rainfall. In some of the h lowland areas along the Gulf Coast, there may be as mu as 18 feet (6 meters) of rain a year. The northern deser receive as little as 4 inches (10 centimeters) of precipit tion yearly.

These natural variations in climate and geograp provide the framework for Mexico's regional diversit Within this framework exist many other dramatic diffe ences—social, political, and economic. Far from being nation with a single, monolithic culture, Mexico can b seen as a group of *five* different nations, each with its ow boundaries and major cities, each with its own goals an priorities. The boundaries of these regions cannot b found on any map, but they may be more real than th old political divisions represented by state and nation borders. Let's take a look at the fiv "nations" that make up modern Mexico diverse society.

Metropolitan Mexico

Although it occupies a small amount space, Metropolitan Mexico is one of the mo populous of Mexico's five nations. Over 20 m lion people live in this region, which encompass

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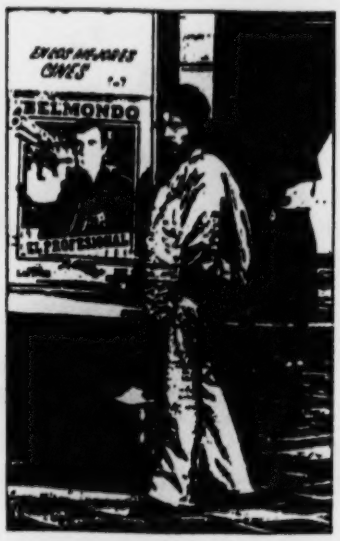
exi[illegible] City, the Federal District (similar to the District of olumbia in the US), and many municipalities in the sur-ounding state of Mexico. "Metromex" occupies the nti[illegible] Valley of Mexico, the historic center of the Aztec mpire. Before the Spanish conquest, a large, shallow ke made the Valley of Mexico a fertile agricultural area. low Lake Texcoco is dried up, and the dust from the old ke bed mingles with the smoke of 100,000 factories and he [illegible]haust of three million vehicles. Hemmed in by high nou[illegible]tains, Metromex has one of the world's most pollut-d environments.

Despite the pollution, Metromex is a vital center of mo[illegible]rn Mexican life. One half of all Mexican industry is located here, and the area accounts for one third of the gro[illegible]s national product. Me[illegible]omex contains the headquarters of Mexican go[illegible]rnment, banking, co[illegible]mmerce, television, sports, and music. The Ba[illegible]lica of the Virgin of Guadalupe, located north of downtown, is the most im[illegible]ortant shrine of Mexican Catholicism.



With such a concentrati[illegible] of economic, political, and cultural activity, it is n[illegible] surprising that the p[illegible]ulation of Metropolitan Mexico has doubled in less than a decade. Every day, hundreds of people arrive from other parts of Mexico. By the latest count, almost one out of every four Mexicans calls Metromex home.

Metropolitan Mexico reflects the results of this rapid and uneven growth. Its inhabitants include a small class of rich people who live in fashionable suburbs, shop at exclusive French, US, and Italian shops, and have private satellite dishes to pick up television from the US and Europe. Their lifestyle is equal to that of the wealthy in cities like New York, Paris, or Rome. There is also a prosperous middle class in Metromex. About two to three million people are government employees or unionized workers. These people have secure jobs and salaries that are sometimes supplemented by corruption and graft. They have traditionally supported the ruling political party, PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional* or Institutional Revolutionary Party), which has held power in Mexico continuously since 1929, and have often benefitted from its policies.

The majority of Metromex inhabitants do not enjoy the privileged lives of the upper and middle classes. These people are poor, with over 50% living in one-room houses without running water. About 40% lack adequate health care, and 25% do not have enough to eat. Most of the poor have come to Metromex from other regions, seeking to improve their lives. They continue to arrive, even though they find few jobs and opportunities awaiting them.

With all its enormous problems, Metropolitan Mexico may seem headed for disaster. But it continues to grow and survive because of the central role it plays in Mexico's political, economic, and cultural life.

BORDERLAND

Only one other region of Mexico rivals the power and influence of Metromex. That is the area we will call Borderland. This northern Mexican "nation" covers an enormous territory and, in fact, extends across the border into the southwestern US. A land of deserts and mountains, Borderland has a population of nearly 25 million within Mexico. The area is sparsely settled, but it includes such booming industrial cities as El Paso-Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Tijuana, and Monterrey.

The Borderland area has always been noted for its independence and its unique way of life. Separated from the capital in Mexico City by miles of desert, ranchers and miners in the colonial period learned to be self-reliant. Today the people of Borderland are still doing things their own way. Many of them even suppor[illegible] an opposition political party, PAN (*Partido de Acción Nacional* or National Action Party), which competes with the powerful PRI for control in the area and in other parts of Mexico.

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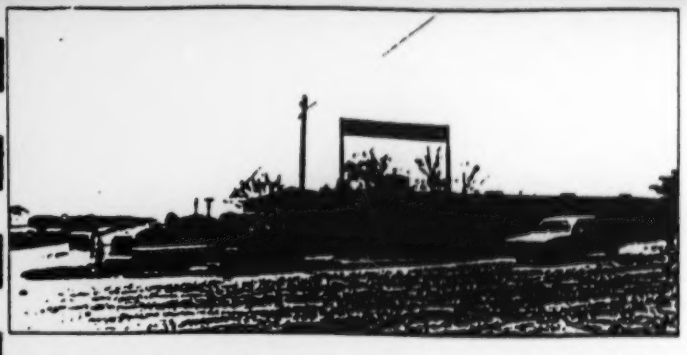


Because this northern region is closer to cities in the US than it is to Metropolitan Mexico, it has strong connections with its North American neighbors. In their speech, the people of Borderland use *pochismos*, a combination of Spanish and English (*pushón* equals "push," *troca* means "truck"). They cheer for the Dallas Cowboys and the Los Angeles Dodgers. The citizens of Monterrey enjoy hamburgers and hot dogs as well as *cabrito al pastor*, roast goat served with a spicy *salsa* (sauce) made of *chiles* (chili peppers). Of course, the influence goes both ways. North of the US-Mexican border, Mexican food, clothing, and architecture are common. The melodies of *mariachi* bands and *la música ranchera* (ranch music) can be heard in Texas and New Mexico as well as in the Mexican states of Chihuahua and Sonora.

The economy of Borderland also has an international flavor. In recent years, hundreds of US manufacturers have crossed the border to build factories in Mexico under the provisions of the *maquiladora* program. These businesses use inexpensive Mexican labor to assemble and export products made from raw materials that are brought into Mexico duty free. Tourism and smuggling also provide economic opportunities along *la frontera* (the border).

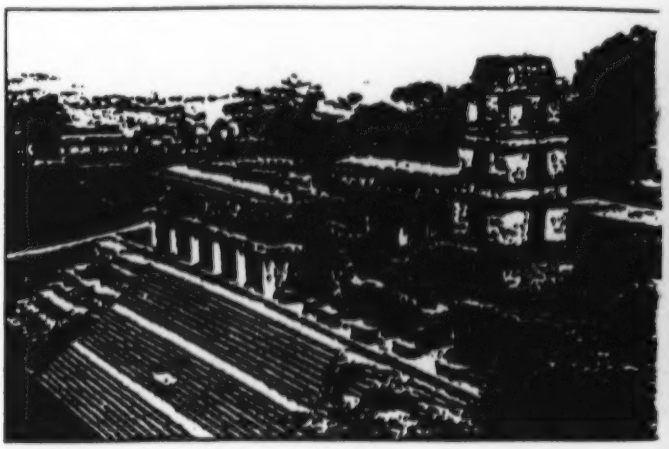
In the western part of the region, large-scale agriculture is practiced. Huge irrigated farms, owned by wealthy Mexican families or jointly owned by Mexican and US corporations, use the latest in high-tech farm machinery to grow grains, vegetables, and cotton for the US market.

Northeast Borderland is an industrial area, with Monterrey as its capital. Well known for their business skills, the *regiomontanos* (as the people from Monterrey are known) manufacture steel, beer, petrochemicals, and building products. Like many parts of the region, the city has a thriving economy that offers strong competition to Metropolitan Mexico.

South Mexico

In the far south, over a thousand miles from la frontera, lies another of Mexico's "nations"—South Mexico. This region borders the Central American countries of Guatemala and Belize. It includes many different landscapes and climates, ranging from cool, mountainous highlands to tropical rainforests. South Mexico has a population of about 15 million, half of which is Indian (including Zapotec, Mixtec, and Maya, among other Indian groups) and most of which is poor.

Unlike Borderland and Metropolitan Mexico, South Mexico has no giant cities or major centers of industry and commerce. Its most important cities, like Oaxaca and Mérida, are medium-sized communities that provide services to people in the area. Most of the inhabitants of South Mexico live in small towns and villages or even remote hamlets. Many make their livings by growing crops on small family farms. Others produce crafts as a source of income. The states of Oaxaca and Chiapas are



well known for pottery, textiles, and wooden toys. In Guerrero, people make masks, while Yucatán produces hammocks and Panama-style hats. These crafts are sold to tourists from abroad and from other parts of Mexico who come to see South Mexico's many Indian ruins.

The economy of South Mexico depends on small-scale agriculture, but environmental problems have made farming difficult. In the highlands, where many people live, soil erosion caused by overcutting forests has reduced the amount of good farm land available. In Chiapas, farmers are moving into the rainforest, *la selva lacandona*, and chopping down ancient trees to clear plots for planting corn and beans.

Faced with such problems, the natives of South Mexico usually look to the past for answers and cling to their traditions. Many Zapotec, Mixtec, Maya, and other Indians in the region live traditional lives, eating corn tortillas and black beans and wearing *huaraches* (leather sandals) and handwoven costumes. As in the past, local government is run by political bosses who have firm control over the opposition. Even the Spanish spoken in South Mexico tends to be slower and more conservative than in other regions, blending in Indian words and concepts.

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E OLONIAL HEARTLAND

n another Mexican "nation," the traditions that survive Spanish rather than Indian. The Colonial Heartland, in tra Mexico, occupies the region where Spanish

onists first settled in the 1500s and 1600s. This area has und nt water and good land. Today as in colonial times, s the breadbasket of Mexico, producing wheat, corn, getables, and fruits for its own people and for the popu- ion f Metropolitan Mexico.

Many of the 30 million inhabitants of the Colonial eartland live in cities that are centuries old. These com- uni es have their own cultural traditions, dating back the colonial period. Guadalajara, for example, is own for the conservative Spanish attitude of its peo- e, who are called *tapatíos*. This old colonial city is the me of mariachi music, which is considered typically exi n by most people in the US. The *jarochos*, inhabi- nts f Veracruz, move to the lively rhythms of *la salsa*, a usic that reflects the Caribbean connections of this Gulf bas city. In colonial Puebla, people still enjoy a tradi- on dish of chicken or turkey covered with *mole*

poblano, a rich sauce made of chiles, chocolate, and peanuts.

Despite its enduring traditions and stable communities, the Colonial Heartland has some of the same problems as other Mexican nations. Its political system is controlled by the PRI, even though opposition parties have come close to winning some elections. The region is overpopulated, and jobs are scarce. Many of its young people have to go north, *al norte*, to Borderland and into the US to find work. Because of overpopulation, the rivers that make this such a fertile area are now polluted with waste.

CLUB MEX

The fifth "nation" of modern Mexico is also the newest and probably the smallest. Club Mex is made up of resort communities scattered along the Mexican coastline. North Americans are very familiar with this part of Mexico, which includes Cancún, Acapulco, Puerto Vallarta, and Mazatlán.

Unlike other Mexican "nations," which grew naturally over hundreds of years, much of Club Mex was created. Old port towns like Acapulco and Mazatlán were trans-

formed into tourist centers. Resorts like Cancún and Ixtapa were built from scratch to become vacation spots for people looking for fun in the sun.

Business and government interests in Metropolitan Mexico, along with investors from the US and other parts of the world, have poured billions into the development of Club Mex. The two million or so tourists who visit the resorts each year bring much-needed money into the country. The tourist industry also provides jobs for some of the 1.5 million inhabitants of Club Mex, as well as a market for food and products produced in other regions.

But citizens of the other Mexican "nations" wonder if too much government money has gone into the development of Club Mex—money that might have been used to improve conditions in their regions. There is also growing concern about the environmental damage being caused by the resorts, with their giant hotels, highways, and airports.

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Five Nations in One

The people of Mexico have many things in common—a shared history, religion, language, even the television programs they watch. But there are also important differences. The five nations of modern Mexico include many traditions and heritages, resources and problems, goals and priorities. By studying these five regions, we get a view of Mexico far richer than the old stereotype of a land of cactus and wide-brimmed straw hats or *sombreros*. The United States and Mexico share a common trait as nations characterized by regional diversity. However, regional isolation and less evenly spread development makes Mexico's regionalism even more pronounced than that of the US. To understand Mexico, we need to keep in mind these differences.

Vocabulary

al norte
Borderland
cabrito al pastor
chiles serranos
Club Mex
Colonial Heartland
conquistador
Federal District
(la) frontera
gross national product
hamlets
huaraches
isthmus
Isthmus of Tehuantepec
jarochos
Lake Texcoco
mariachi
Metromex
mole poblano
(la) música ranchera
peninsula
petrochemicals
plateau
pochismos
regiomontanos
(la) salsa
(la) selva lacandona
Sierra Madre Occidental
Sierra Madre Oriental
Sierra Madre del Sur
South Mexico
tapatíos
Yucatán Peninsula